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ABSTRACT

Knowledge of individual differences of victim responses to and recovery from rape is necessary in order to provide for each victim's individual needs. Black women may be exposed to more violence in their culture and may be treated differently than white women. These differences may lead to different recovery patterns between black and white rape victims. The potential recovery differences between black and white rape victims were examined in the areas of anxiety, fear, psychological distress, self-esteem, and mood states. Rape victims (N=27) and nonvictims (N=27) were divided by race and compared on five self-report measures at 6-21 day, 3-month, and 6-month time intervals following the rape. Significant differences occurred between the black and white victim groups on occupation, marital status, residence, and length of time in South Carolina. Results indicated that white subjects were more distressed than black subjects by the rape experience initially; however, the recovery pattern for the white and black victims was similar. (NRB)

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COMPARISON OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY OF BLACK AND WHITE VICTIMS OF RAPE

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COMPARISON OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY OF BLACK AND WHITE VICTIMS OF RAPE

According to the FBI Uniform Crime Reports 75,990 rapes were reported to law enforcement officials during 1979, an increase of 13% over the previous year. The number of unreported rapes is estimated at 2 to 3.5 times as many as are reported (Chappell, 1976). Though community concern and research surrounding this issue have been greatly increased in the past decade, statistics emphasize that rape is still a major growing problem in our society. While there is an obvious need for research on the causes and prevention of sexual assault, there is an immediate need to study the impact of the crime on the victim.

Research to date has demonstrated that victims of rape do have strong psychological reactions resulting from the experience (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974; Kilpatrick, Veronen, & Resick, 1979; Veronen & Kilpatrick, 1980). The need to find out more about these reactions is, of course, important for people involved in health and mental health care delivery services. Knowledge of individual differences of victim responses and recovery to this life-threatening experience is especially warranted in order to better provide for each victim's individual needs. At its 1980 meeting in Austin, Texas, the National Coalition against Sexual Assault expressed concern that the special needs of rape victims of minority groups are not thoroughly known. Black victims' recovery following a rape experience, in particular, is an area in which little information has been gathered.

There is reason to believe that black women are exposed to more violence in their culture and are treated differently following assault than

white women. These differences could lead to different patterns of recovery between black and white sexual assault victims. In a review of the relevant literature, researchers have found that blacks are overrepresented among victims of rape as well as other violent crimes (Amir, 1971; Katz & Mazur, 1979; Rabkin, 1979). MacDonald (1971) reported that blacks were victimized by more than one rapist three times as often as white victims.

From a socioeconomic standpoint, most blacks have lower status than most whites. Therefore, the higher percentage of rape of black victims could be occurring partly because of the relatively disadvantaged living and working conditions under which many black women exist. Friedman (1978) noted that more black than white women are found living in unsafe housing and are more often forced to use inadequate transportation to get to late night jobs. The lack of economic power of black women could also cause them problems following a rape experience. Their inability to escape unsafe living conditions could expose them to a higher risk for repeated victimization.

Not only have differences been found in the frequency of black and white victimization, but some studies have also indicated that black victims may receive different treatment following a rape. The University of Pennsylvania Law Review (1968) noted that the number of unfounded rapes were higher when both victim and offender were black than when both were white. Nonwhite adult victims have been found to have been believed less often than white adult victims (Hayman, Stewart, Lewis, & Grant, 1968). Given this response, it is no wonder that Amir (1971) as well as Hursch and Selkin (1974) have reported that black adult victims refused more often than white victims to cooperate with police or prosecute.

It seems that the demands on black women are different than those on white women. People expect different responses from black women depending on their perspective. Deckard (1979) feels that today black women have been forced to face the dilemma of choosing between the "white women's" or the "male-dominated, black" movements. She goes on to explain that this dilemma seems to have evolved because black men feel it is important for black women to take a subordinate position to them in order to strengthen the damaged, black male ego. From another viewpoint, one could conclude that this dilemma has come from the failure of the feminist movement to integrate racism into its picture of rape (Friedman, 1978). Feminism has tended to view rape more from the side of white women being victimized by men without considering the different ramifications rape has for black women. This lack of insight seems to have carried to the service agencies which are predominantly white oriented. The black woman may see herself as having more in common with her black, male assailant than with her female, white counterpart and the "white" agencies.

Whatever the reasons, the black woman is confronted with these two powerful movements, both demanding equal consideration, energy, and loyalty. Her involvement with these two national forces may affect the black woman's response to assault and recovery from it, inasmuch as one movement could encourage her to think mainly of her own recovery and other women who could be victimized in the same way, while the other movement could be emphasizing the need to band together as black people to protect black men from the injustices of the "white" judicial system. Reporting a rape by a black man could be seen as betraying the black people of her neighborhood. Of course, these two forces alone are not the

only reasons why black victims could have different recovery patterns than white ones. A lack of economic resources, social support networks, community services as well as overt and subtle racism from authorities could strongly affect the reaction and recovery of the black rape victim.

There have been very few, if any, controlled studies looking at the potential recovery differences between black and white victims. Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) suggested that black victims show more fear of another rape than white victims. Perhaps this observation is an indication of how the black woman's lack of economic power may affect her concerns following a rape differently from a white woman's. Speculations as to how and why there could be differences between white and black victims' recovery could be extensive. The important first step in treating this issue is to find out whether there are recovery differences to be found.

The objective of the current study was to look for potential recovery differences between black and white victims in the areas of anxiety, fear, psychological distress, self-esteem, and mood states. The self-report instruments used were the Derogatis Symptom Checklist (Derogatis, 1977), the Modified Fear Survey (Veronen & Kilpatrick, 1980), the Profile of Mood States Scale (McNair, Lorr, & Droppleman, 1971) the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Luschene, 1970) and the Self-Report Inventory (Bown, 1961). The study contained a victim group (n=27) and a nonvictim comparison group (n=27) matched for race, age, and general area of residence. A matched nonvictim group for both races was used to help control for any potential racial bias in the assessment instruments. The victim and nonvictim groups were divided by race and compared on five self-report measures at the 6 to 21 day, the three month, and the six month time periods following the rape. A series of 2 (victim status) x

2 (race) x 3 (assessment period) ANOVAs were performed on the scale scores of the self-report instruments. Duncan's multiple-range tests were used to find where the significant differences between means were on the measures which had significant main or interaction effects involving the racial variable. Also, a series of Chi Square tests were performed on the demographic information to establish the success of the matching procedures as well as to identify any demographic differences between racial groups.

The results of the Chi Square analyses indicated that, for the most part, the matching procedures were successful in getting appropriate comparison groups (see Table 1). No significant differences were found between the black victim and nonvictim groups while there were two significant differences ($p<.05$) between the white victim and nonvictim groups on the residence and length of time in South Carolina variables. Significant differences ($p.<.05$) were found between the black and white victim groups on occupation, marital status, residence, and length of time in South Carolina. The only significant difference ($P<.01$) found between the black and white nonvictim groups was on length of time in South Carolina.

The results of the ANOVAs and Duncan's multiple range tests indicated that there were few significant differences on the dependent measures which were attributable to racial status (see Table 2). The significant differences which were found indicated that the white subjects were more disturbed than the black subjects by the sexual assault experience initially, yet the pattern of recovery for the white and black victims was similar (see figures 1-6).

The other significant findings involving the victim status and assessment period variables indicated on Table 2 support the findings of Kilpatrick,

Veronen, and Resick (1979) which were that victims are significantly more disturbed than nonvictims due to a rape experience and that they do improve over time.

There are four possible explanations for the results of this study. First, white women in general could have less exposure to violence than black women causing a sexual assault to affect them more acutely. Another explanation could be that the measures used are more sensitive to the problems which white victims encounter than to those of black victims. Thirdly, the findings could have resulted from the black subjects defensiveness when tested by a member of an all white staff. Finally, it could be that the black women were better able to cope with the stress of a sexual assault, perhaps resulting from better support groups or some other intervening variables.

Whatever the explanation, it is important to note that a rape experience does affect black and white women similarly though the degree of initial distress may be different. Future investigations should look into the four possible explanations discussed previously. If Black victims are better able to handle this type of stress, then an understanding of their coping strategies could aid in treating other victims. However, if habituation to violence, biased testing, or defensiveness played roles in obscuring the results, further refinement of future research should help make clear any racial differences in the recovery of victims of sexual assault.

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Table 1

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON BLACK VICTIM (N=12), BLACK NONVICTIM (N=12), WHITE VICTIM (N=15), AND WHITE NONVICTIM (N=15) GROUPS

VARIABLE	BLACK VICTIMS	BLACK NONVICTIMS	WHITE VICTIMS	WHITE NONVICTIMS
Occupation				
Student	33.33%	25.00%	-	13.33%
Teacher	-	8.33	6.67	6.67
Waitress	-	16.67	6.67	13.33
Clerk-Secretary	-	16.67	26.67	26.67
Housewife	8.33	8.33	13.33	13.33
Salesperson	8.33	-	-	-
Nurse	-	-	-	6.67
Other	16.67	16.67	46.67	20.00
No Occupation	33.33	8.33	-	-
Education Status (highest level achieved)				
Attended elem. school	-	8.33	-	-
Completed elem. school	25.00	8.33	6.67	-
Attended high school	16.67	8.33	13.33	13.33
Completed high school	41.67	58.33	40.00	53.33
Attended college	8.33	8.33	26.67	6.67
Completed or currently 4th year of college	8.33	8.33	13.33	26.67
Additional education: business/vocational training	25.00	41.67	40.00	33.33
Attended grad. school	-	8.33	6.67	13.33
Completed or currently 4th yr. grad. school	-	8.33	-	-
Marital Status				
Never married	75.00	50.00	20.00	13.33
Married (1st marriage)	8.33	25.00	20.00	40.00
Remarried	-	-	-	6.67
Separated	-	16.67	33.33	13.33
Divorced	-	-	20.00	20.00
Widowed	8.33	8.33	-	-
Cohabiting	8.33	-	6.67	6.67
Residence				
Apartment	33.33	25.00	53.33	13.33
Own or rent house	50.00	66.67	20.00	66.67
Trailer	-	-	26.67	13.33
Other	16.67	8.33	-	6.67

VARIABLE	BLACK VICTIMS	BLACK NONVICTIMS	WHITE VICTIMS	WHITE NONVICTIMS
Present Living Arrangements				
With parents	50.00%	6.67%	6.67%	26.67%
With husband	8.33	25.00	20.00	40.00
With boyfriend	8.33	-	6.67	20.00
With girlfriend	-	8.33	-	-
With female roommate	-	8.33	6.67	-
With male roommate	-	-	-	-
Alone	-	-	26.67	6.67
With offspring	41.67	50.00	20.00	46.67
Other	58.33	41.67	13.33	6.67
More than 1 of above	66.67	41.67	-	46.67
Religious Preference				
Protestant	50.00	83.33	46.67	73.33
Catholic	8.33	-	13.33	6.67
Jewish	8.33	-	-	6.67
None	25.00	8.33	33.33	6.67
Other	8.33	8.33	6.67	6.67
Church Attendance per mo.				
0 times	25.00	8.33	60.00	26.67
1 or 2 times	50.00	41.67	26.67	33.33
3 or 4 times	16.67	16.67	6.67	33.33
More than 4 times	8.33	33.33	6.67	6.67
State of Legal Residence				
South Carolina	100.00	100.00	80.00	93.33
Other	-	-	20.00	6.67
Length of Time in S. C.				
Less than one year	-	-	13.33	-
1-3 years	8.33	-	26.67	-
3-5 years	8.33	-	6.67	-
5-10 years	-	-	33.33	46.67
More than 10 years	83.33	100.00	20.00	53.33
Mean Ages	25.92 yrs.	27.25 yrs.	24.60 yrs.	26.73 yrs.

Table 2

Results of Analyses of Variance: F Values and Significance Levels

Dependent Measure	Racial Status (R)	Victim Status (V)	R x V	Assessment Period (A)	A x R	A x V	A x R x V
STAI							
A-state	.20	2.38	.10	4.39*	.09	1.93	2.98
A-trait	.06	6.30*	.92	11.78***	.05	6.11**	.91
MFS							
Animal	3.57	0.00	.47	10.62***	.25	2.75	.08
Tissue	.62	.77	.28	19.05***	.46	2.53	.42
Classical	.17	4.44*	2.84	10.85***	.92	2.70	.57
Social	1.39	5.92*	2.53	25.23***	.62	3.22*	.36
Miscellaneous	.25	1.43	1.88	25.06***	.47	.15	.04
Failure	1.48	4.46*	2.32	25.05***	.73	1.98	.40
Rape	.89	7.92**	2.65	26.83***	1.41	3.46*	.12
Overall	.50	4.70*	2.22	31.34***	.50	3.59*	.09
SCL-90R							
Somatization	0.00	8.77**	1.66	5.12**	.31	9.08***	.38
Obsessive-Compulsive	.01	7.38**	1.34	18.32***	.46	9.38***	2.04
Interpersonal	.11	4.14*	1.79	10.44***	1.44	1.62	1.42
Depression	.42	7.50**	2.13	16.93***	.95	10.36***	2.80
Anxiety	2.83	13.60***	1.75	16.86***	2.69	10.14***	4.16*
Hostility	.86	1.68	.59	7.72***	4.90**	.33	2.42
Phobic Anxiety	2.29	14.55***	3.05	23.44***	2.55	15.50***	2.84
Paranoia	.04	2.65	1.66	13.36***	1.45	.01	.20
Psychoticism	.32	4.83*	2.03	15.31***	1.15	6.06**	1.73
GSI	.53	8.70**	2.65	20.87***	2.29	11.61***	2.66
PSDI	.25	8.76**	.15	8.22***	1.04	3.46*	1.27
PST	.51	4.20*	5.12*	16.32***	.58	4.00*	.39
POMS							
Tension	6.11*	5.73*	.37	6.14**	.11	8.01***	.10
Depression	1.77	5.79*	.12	6.88**	.36	13.61***	.22
Anger	4.61*	2.42	.56	4.12*	.78	7.06**	.01
Vigor	.99	2.24	.47	5.27**	1.84	1.50	.04
Fatigue	4.62*	5.26*	2.19	3.12*	.94	6.29**	.54
Confusion	.62	3.93	.02	2.24	.53	6.17**	.29
SRI							
Self	.25	7.58**	.31	3.37*	.65	2.[illegible]	2.57
Other	2.36	7.21**	.83	.40	2.21	1.92	.89
Children	4.36*	2.01	1.26	.61	.20	.51	.26
Authority	.22	2.23	.50	.33	1.54	3.65*	.03
Work	.03	2.30	2.18	.28	1.69	1.70	.19
Reality	.63	2.12	.01	.14	.90	.98	.29
Parent	1.75	4.15*	.20	1.76	1.65	5.06**	3.05
Hope	.12	1.44	1.16	.79	1.12	1.63	.18
Total	.89	7.43**	.68	.01	.62	.98	1.29

*p < .05; **p < .01; *** p < .001

Figure 1

Means from the Anxiety Scale of the SCL-90R

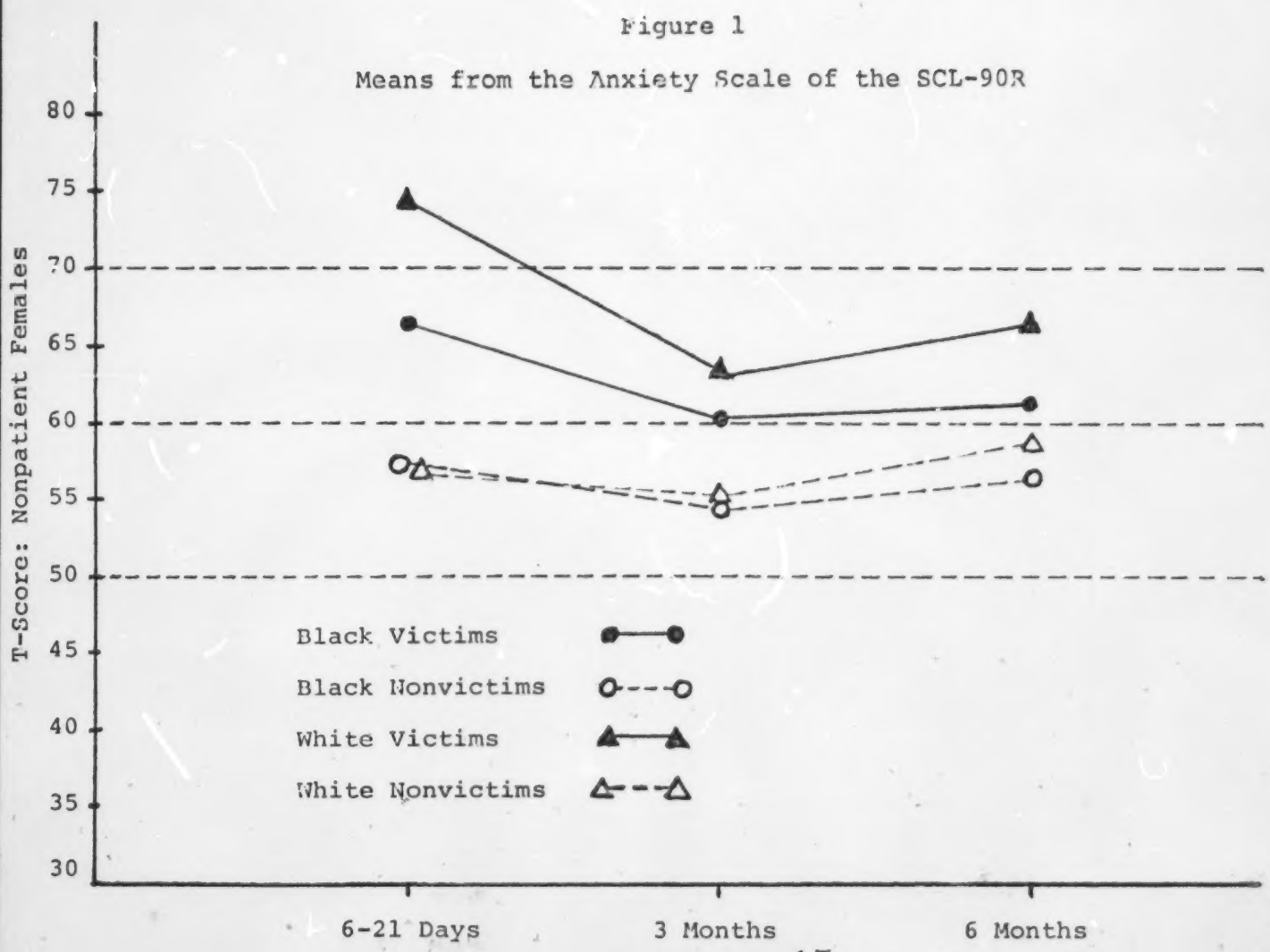

Figure 2

Means from the Hostility Scale of the SCL-90R

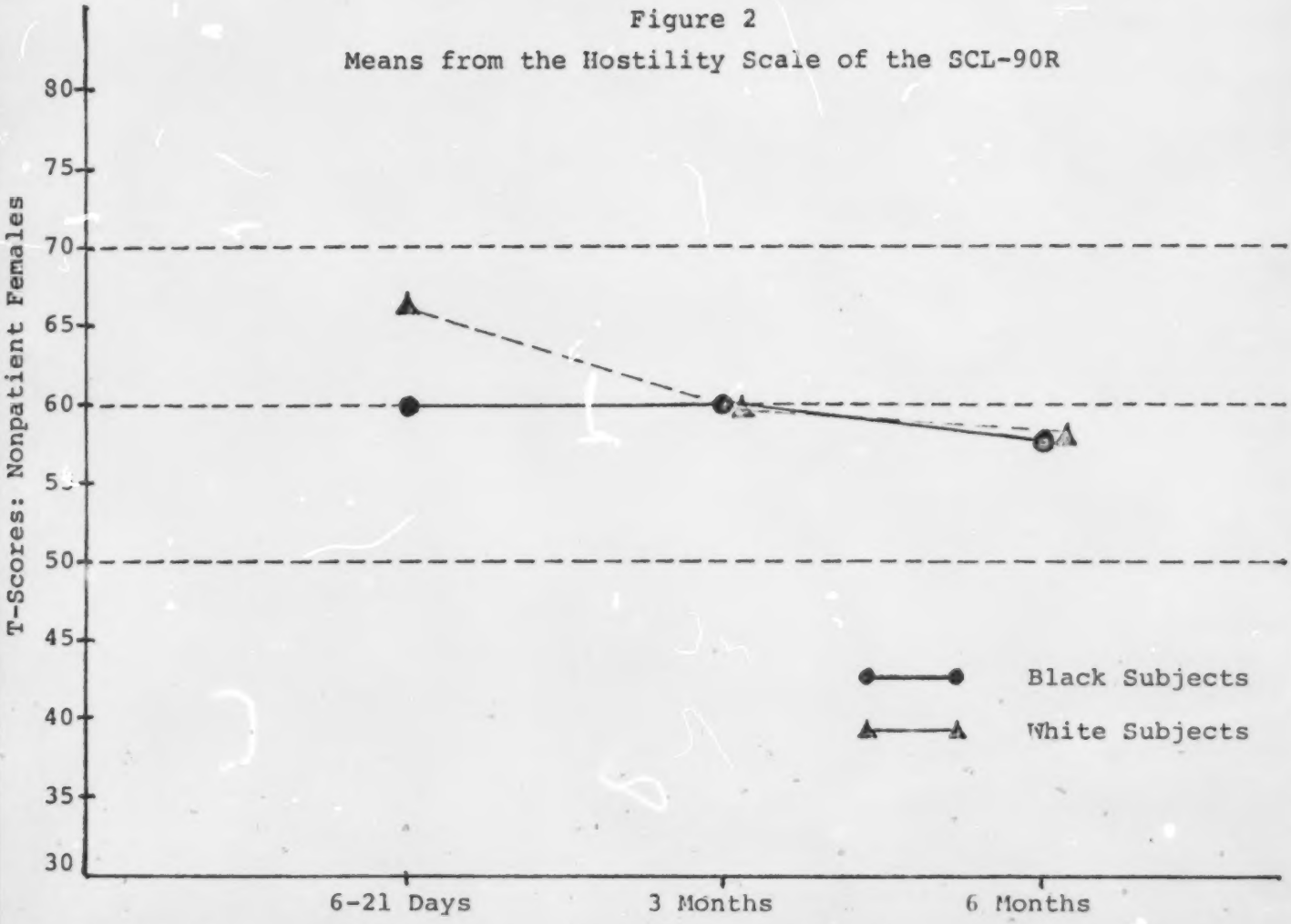

Figure 3

Means from the Tension Scale of the POMS

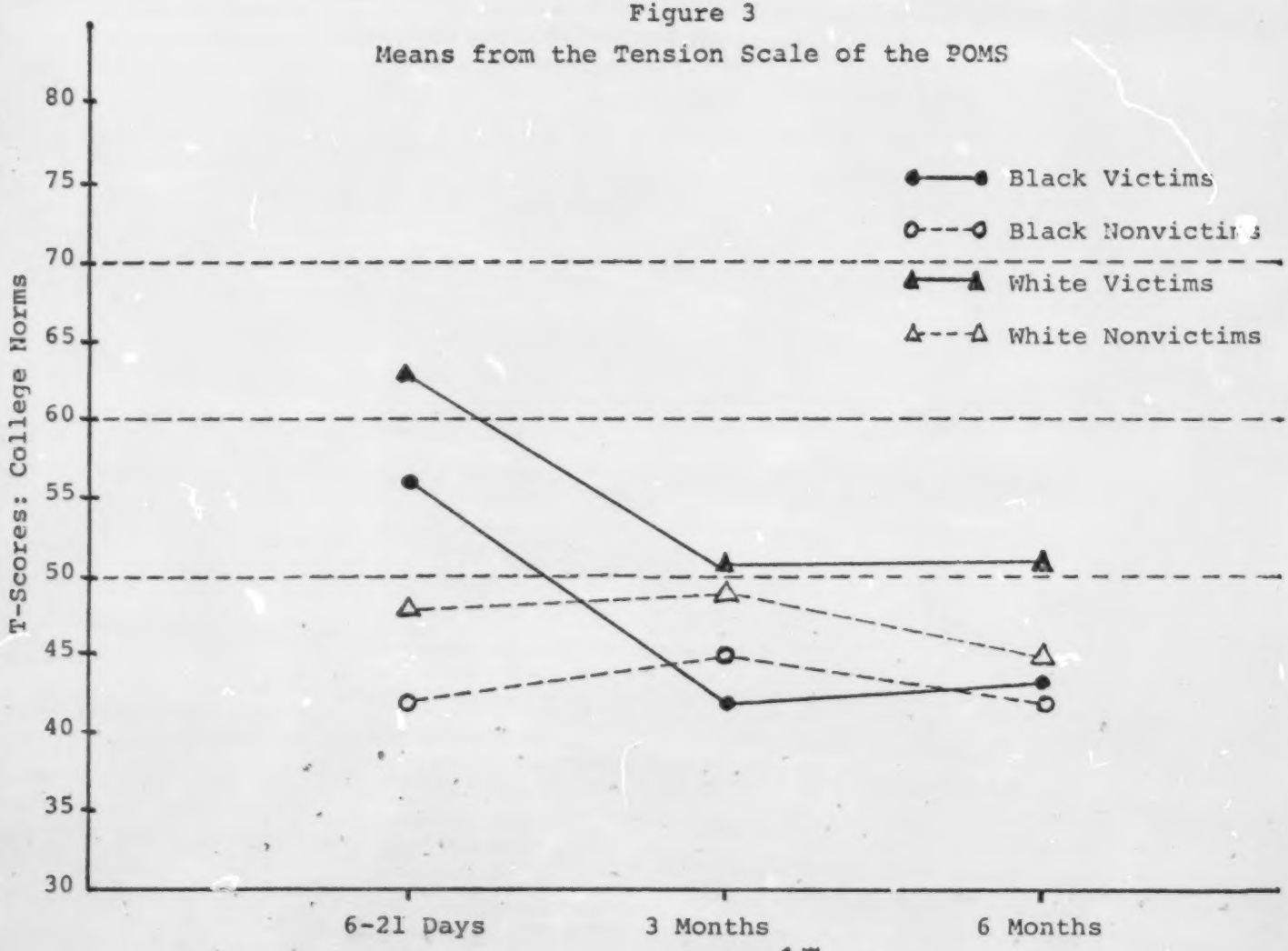

Figure 4

Means from the Anger Scale of the POMS

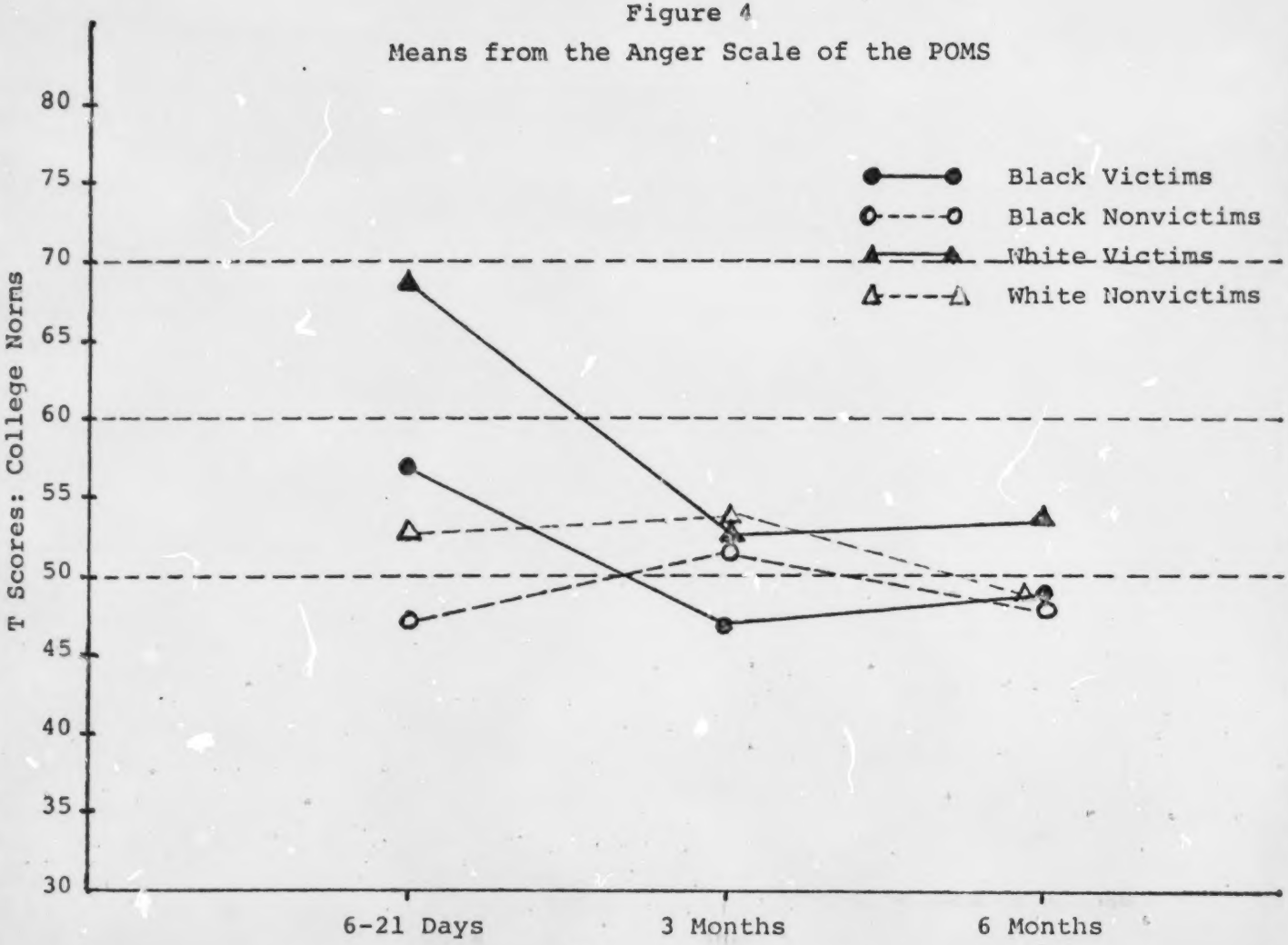

Figure 5
Means from the Fatigue Scale of the POMS

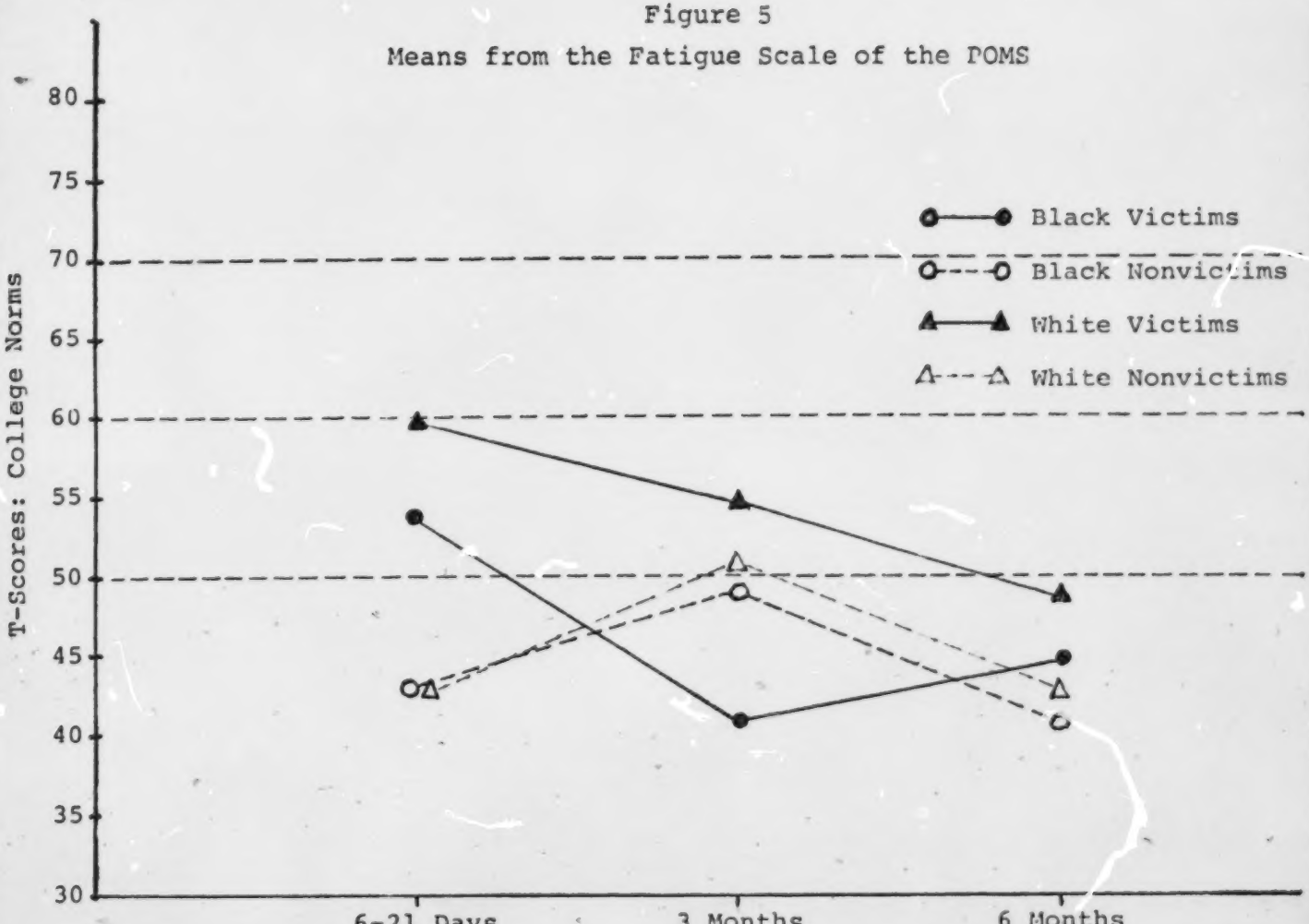

Figure 6

Means from the Children Scale of the SRI